

MICHIGAN LEGWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

JUNE 2007

The Fun Committee Helps to Boost Morale for Many DLEG Employees

THE FIRST THING MEMBERS OF THE DLEG Fun Committee hear from employees is “what a great idea!” Then the next questions are, “what does the Fun Committee do, and why do you do it?”

The answers are usually something like this. The Fun Committee often tries to do things that may help the community, such as bake sales or the Giving Tree during the holiday season. They have helped several families who have a parent in the military and have even sent money to help Hurricane Katrina victims in Louisiana.

The committee also tries to schedule a monthly event for coworkers. This may be just a floor activity such as the Christmas luncheon, or a building activity such as the salad luncheons, ice cream socials, and book fairs, or even a DLEG activity such as a Meet and Greet with the Director’s Office, or DLEG night with the Lugnuts. Some are one-time events and others are yearly events.

One of the most popular activities was last year’s Tailgate Party, which included a compilation of recipes into a cookbook that was distributed to staff, free of charge. The event was so popular that the Committee has decided to hold a similar one in August, this one with a chili theme.

Another popular activity was the Pet Photo judging contest, although according to Fun Committee President Amber Lemon, food-related activities generally get the best response. For example, the salad luncheons have been so popular, the Committee is trying to make it a regular event, holding it every other month or so.

Why have a Fun Committee? Committee members say they have found that all the activities help to boost productivity as well as the morale of DLEG coworkers, leading to better working relationships with each other.

“After all, we spend a good share of our lives with our coworkers,” Fun Committee member Alice Wood said.



Alice Wood, Linda Cook, Sharon Malone, Amber Lemon, Helen Stickney and Gina Coon, some of the members of the Fun Committee, received a “Special Delivery from the Director” earlier this year. Many members are not pictured.

“We are very fortunate that staff support the book sales, because the proceeds from those help fund events so that we can offer them at a low cost to everyone,” Amber said. “We’re always looking for new members, so anyone who is interested should let us know (they just need to be sure to get supervisor approval first).”

Be sure to watch for upcoming events like the Chili Cook off, salad luncheon, Lugnuts game, and even a sub luncheon. And if you have any suggestions for an event, please feel free to share it with the Fun Committee.

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Jim Smiertka



Film at 11! Director Cooley recently appeared as the guest on MGTV's "Conversations With..." Series. Host Bill Trevarthen interviewed the director about a variety of topics, including his work experience, personal life, and current DLEG hot topics. MGTV reaches about 1.6 million Michigan homes, schools and businesses served by cable television.

Summertime, and the Livin' is Easy...

It doesn't get much better than summer in Michigan. Our beautiful state truly is a warm-weather playground, with 3,200 miles of shoreline, 11,000 inland lakes, over 850 golf courses, 97 state parks and four national parks, sandy dunes, underwater preserves, and more freshwater coastline than any other state in the country.

A wealth of information on our state's many attractions is available at www.michigan.org/travel. Be sure to check out the "one-tank trip" suggestions that help stretch vacation dollars. In Michigan you are never more than 85 miles from a Great Lake, and there are plenty of other great destinations that can be reached in 200 miles or less round trip. But whether you take a quick day trip to the beach for the day or do a two-week tour of the Upper Peninsula, Michigan is a great place to spend your summer vacation.

There are also several fun events planned for DLEG employees to enjoy this summer. The Detroit Tigers and Lansing Lugnuts outings are fast approaching, and the DLEG Golf Outing is scheduled for August 10. The organizers promise it's not serious golf, so I hope everyone feels welcome to join in the fun. A sign-up sheet is available in this newsletter and on the DLEG Intranet.

So after you've worked hard, take some time to play too. Hop on your bike, fire up the grill, jump in a lake, or just lie back in a hammock — whatever you do, get out there and enjoy summer!

Keith W. Cooley

Sincerely,
Keith W. Cooley



Farewell to Jim Smiertka

DLEG says farewell to Jim Smiertka, who resigned effective June 1, 2007. Jim joined DLEG as a senior executive assistant in February of 2004. Prior to joining state government, he served as the attorney for the City of Lansing. Jim leaves DLEG to go into private practice and also will be working with Prima Civitas, the regional economic development group headed by former DLEG Director David C. Hollister.

Best wishes to you, Jim — you will be missed!

Smart Commuters Are Winners!

Congratulations to the DLEG participants in this year's Smart Commute on their first place win in the small office category! The DLEG team, consisting of staff from the Executive Office, Energy Office, and the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs (OPLA), had 15 out of 15 team members participate for at least one smart commute day, with an average participation rate of 58 percent. The second place contenders (Michigan Environmental Council, or MEC) had nine of 15 team members participate with an average participation rate of 28%.

Last year, MEC beat the DLEG team by about 1 percent, so this was an especially good victory, according to organizer Pat Hudson of the Energy Office.

"Smart commuting is really beneficial both to the environment and to individual well-being," Pat said. "It's great to see so many employees put smart commuting on their personal road map, whether it's for one day or on a regular basis."

Sponsored by the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council (MidMEAC) since 2005, the Smart Commute Challenge encourages workers to use alternative transportation to get to their jobs. Prizes are given to mini, small, medium and large offices whose workers make the greatest smart commuting efforts. Participants are provided with safe routes to get to work, and checkpoints are set up along the way. Smart Commute modes that receive credit include telecommuting/working from home; bicycling; walking; carpooling; riding the bus; and any other mode of transportation besides single-occupant vehicle.

As first place winners, the team won a gift certificate for a refurbished bike from the MSU Bike Project. They are planning on donating the certificate to a worthy charitable organization.

Congrats to all of the DLEG Smart Commuters!

(See page 18 for Tom Martin's bike trip across the United States.)



Members of the Smart Commuter Team include: From L. to R., back row: Tom Krupiarz, Pat Hudson, Roger Doherty, Nick Hemholdt, Director Cooley, Yacedrah Williams, Jan Patrick, Tom Martin, John Sarver, Tim Shireman. Front Row (L. to R.) Susan Corbin, Sparky Hutting, Jeanine benedict, Trista Gregorski and Chelsea Pearson.

Have Wrench and Compressor, Will Travel Jack Nolish Steers the Way to Bike Safety for Kids



A young biker waits patiently while Jack Nolish fine-tunes her bike.

Every year, about 300,000 kids are seriously injured or killed in bike-related accidents. Many of those accidents could have been prevented with a helmet or bike maintenance.

Jack Nolish, Workers' Compensation Agency Director, is doing his part to prevent those accidents — one bike at a time. On June 9, Jack participated in his eighth Bike Safety event, the Helmet Safety Campaign sponsored by the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association (MTLA) in Detroit. At the event, the MTLA handed out over several hundred helmets to needy kids. Jack also volunteered at a similar event in Lansing on May 19.

According to Jesse Green of the MTLA, the organization has handed out more than 15,000 helmets to kids all over Michigan since 2000, when the campaign was founded. MTLA members pledge funds to be used for purchasing helmets, then provide the helmets to kids at fitting events around the state. Specially trained MTLA members volunteer their time to fit the helmets.

Jack's role in these events has evolved over the years. He started out fitting kids with helmets, but

for the past several years has been in charge of the repair tent, using his own personal tools, air compressor, extension cords, air hoses and bike stands. He fills countless tires with air, and adjusts seats, handlebars, brakes, gear shifters and makes other small repairs. Kids stand in line to wait for Jack to work his magic on bikes that other adults may view as a lost cause.

"I decided to do the repair activity when I noticed the poor condition of most of the bikes the kids were bringing to the events," Jack said. "Almost all of these events take place in areas where the gas stations are not the home of the friendly gas station attendant that would help kids with their bikes like they did when I was growing up."

According to Green, Jack endured torrential downpours during last year's event in Hamtramck, even when all the other volunteers retreated inside.

"The only people left outside were three kids who desperately wanted their bikes fixed and were afraid if they left it would never happen... And Jack Nolish," Jesse said. "Jack worked through the rain and eventual sunshine until every single child in line had been helped."

He's an inspiration to all of us."

Keep up the good work, Jack, and thanks for being such a positive representative of DLEG.



These happy faces belong to kids who had their bikes repaired by Jack at the Helmet Safety Campaign event in Lansing.

Bill Milzarski —Continuing the Mission

Sitting in his cubicle in the Victor Building in Lansing, Bill Milzarski comes across as a pretty tough, no-frills kind of guy. He's a veteran of the U.S. Army. He has a lower spinal cord injury and uses leg braces and a forearm crutch. When having his picture taken, he will say that the little upward turn on one side of his mouth is as close to a smile as he's going to give.

Yet, spend a little time with Milzarski, a 36-year-old Rights Representative with the Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns (MCDC), and it becomes clear that he has a soft side.

The MCDC, the only state agency that advocates on behalf of all people with disabilities, regardless of their age or type of disability, seeks to change what it means to be a person with a disability in Michigan by focusing on a person's abilities, rather than their disability.

That's the official description. To Bill, it's simpler than that. He is there to help people.

In his job as a Rights Representative, Bill's responsibilities include assisting citizens with disabilities, providing training to other state employees and organizations on a variety of disability-related issues, and overseeing the Michigan Youth Leadership Forum, a five-day youth leadership forum for high school students with disabilities.

An attorney and social worker, Bill is an expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with co-worker Cheryl Mattson. They are the only people in state government who answer questions from the public on the ADA.

A big chunk of Bill's time on the job is spent on training. He works with others on becoming advocates for people with disabilities, and creates awareness of the many programs that are available. He provides training to other state departments, such as the Department of Natural Resources, on accessibility for clients and works with other departments' ADA coordinators on accessibility policies. He also trains police cadets on how to identify someone with a disability. He is known nationally as an expert on the ADA, and gives lectures at conferences around the country on how disability groups can utilize various programs to better assist their clients.

In his role as advocate for citizens with disabilities, Bill helps over 1,000 clients a year, mostly with employment and accommodation issues. He says without hesitation that this is the best part of his job.

He enjoys helping people solve problems when it seems there is no solution. He often works with other attorneys, who call on behalf of their clients.

"If you're an attorney working in the court system, there's usually not a happy resolution for at least one of the parties. As a disability advocate, I can almost always get some degree of happy outcomes for all parties."

One recent example was the elderly veteran from Three Rivers living in a veterans' facility in Grand Rapids. He was able to get a spot in a home much closer to Three Rivers, but due to his severe disabilities, there was no means in place to physically transport him. His wife contacted Bill for help, and by making a few phone calls to the Veterans Administration, Bill was able to get the man relocated to the new facility.

As Bill says, however, not all of the cases have happy endings. In fact, the case he describes as his most rewarding did not have a happy ending at all.

"At my previous job, a kid with a closed head injury came in with his mom. He had been working on a road crew and was hit by a car. He told me he was depressed and didn't know what to do with his life. I spoke with him at length, explaining various options to him."

The boy and his mother left, and at the end of the week, they came back and told Bill they had already set up an interview with Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

The following Monday, the mom came in and told Bill her son had died over the weekend.

But she wanted Bill to know that for that last week, her son had finally gotten motivated and was looking forward to doing things with his life. She thanked Bill for giving her son hope for the first time since his accident.

"Even though I was very upset that this young man did not survive, I felt good knowing I helped him spend the last week of his life hoping and planning for the future."

A more positive outcome was the recent case of a woman and her daughter, both wheelchair users, who were having a difficult time accessing a new movie theater in Six Lakes. Bill presented the case to the theater management and eventually, an electric door was installed.

He's quick to point out that he is given a great deal of freedom from his superiors to do his job as he sees fit.



Rights Representative Bill Milzarski in the MCDC office.

Bill Milzarski (Continued from Page 5)

“Duncan (Wyeth, Executive Director of MCDC) gives me enough rope to get out there and do what’s right.”

In turn, he is a strong believer in mentoring and has had several interns over the years. Currently, Jasmina Maksimovski, a third-year Cooley law student, has that position. She says working at MCDC with Bill has shown her that advocacy and mediation are the areas she wants to focus on in her career.

“I get to attend meetings and help people. Other students aren’t doing half the things in their internships that I get to do. Bill really lets me see how things work — he’s a great role model,” Jasmina says.

Bill is so committed to his work that he sometimes gets frustrated because he sees so many missed opportunities to help others. For example, he knows there will soon be millions of dollars in federal grants being made available to assist Iraq War Veterans with disabilities, but the state doesn’t have anyone assigned to finding out how to get some of those dollars.

Duncan Wyeth confirms that Bill is indeed tireless in his advocacy efforts. “If there’s one thing I can say after observing Bill, it’s that he’s passionate about his pursuit of social justice for people with disabilities,” Duncan says. “he would do what he does, no matter where he worked.”

Bill says if there was one thing he’d change about his work if he could, it would be to have more cooperation between the various entities that work in his field.

“Coming from state government, I see a lot of programs on the local, federal, and nonprofit level that are bound by their own sets of rules — they’re all

stuck in their own circles of influence,” Bill said. “But I wholeheartedly believe we should be working together, as different spokes on the same wheel. If we coordinated with each other, we could accomplish so much more.”

Yet he doesn’t let roadblocks like that deter him from his mission.

He continues to offer his expertise, deliver training presentations, do the research and go to bat for people with disabilities.

When asked if there is a message he wants to convey to his fellow DLEG employees, Bill doesn’t hesitate.

“In the Army, the overriding goal is always Continuing the Mission, or ‘Charlie-Mike’ in military-speak. As state workers, we are doing good things. We are making a difference in people’s lives. It’s not always easy, especially given the troubled times our state is in. But I would say to all of my co-workers, ‘Charlie-Mike.’”

Bill has been with the MCDC since 2003. Previously, he worked in a similar role at the Center for

Independent Living in Grand Rapids. He has a Bachelors degree in Social Work from Grand Valley State University, and a law

degree from Cooley Law School.

He serves on two nonprofit boards, the Michigan Coalition against Homelessness, and the fiduciary board of the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Board.

Bill comes by his empathy for homeless individuals and people with disabilities through personal experience. He was discharged from the Army in December of 1992, following his injury, and when he and his family returned to Michigan, they spent several months living with friends and family while they tried to start a new life.

Bill has been married to his high school sweetheart Michelle, a postal employee, since 1989. They are the proud parents of three children: 17-year-old twins Andrew and Eric, who will be seniors at Forest Hills Eastern, and 15-year-old Nicole, who will be a freshman. The Milzarskis have had foster children in the past, although they have none currently. They have three golden retrievers and four cats, mostly animals they have taken in as strays or through animal rescue organizations. “We rescue animals,” Bill says simply.

Bill says all three of his kids want to join the military. He thinks maybe it’s because he taught them from the beginning that serving others is the most important thing in life, and that the best way to do that is by serving their country.

Or maybe it’s because they’ve had a role model who’s lived his life by this credo, without frills or fanfare.

**As state workers, we are doing good things.
We are making a difference in people’s lives.**



This theater in Six Lakes had no easily accessible entrance until Bill worked with the management to get an electric door installed.

MIOSHA Meet & Greet

The MIOSHA and MLCC Fun Committees recently hosted a Meet and Greet with Director Cooley and staff at the General Office Building.



L to R: Back Row: Donald Weatherspoon (MLCC Commissioner), Judy Allen (MLCC Commissioner), Marsha Parrott-Boyle (MIOSHA), Nella Davis-Ray (MIOSHA), Cynthia Hutchens-Smith (OSHA), Virgie Rollins (MLCC Commissioner), Director Keith Cooley, Deputy Director, Andy Levin, Nida Samona (MLCC Chairperson), Pat Gagliardi (MLCC Commissioner), Chief of Staff Susan Corbin, Ken Wozniak (MLCC Director), Deputy Director, Sharon Bommarito and Sheila Ide (MIOSHA)

Rosanne Renauer Gives Commencement Speech

Rosanne Renauer, district manager of the Lansing office of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) celebrated the profession of rehabilitation counselor as the featured commencement speaker at the Michigan State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program 2007 graduation ceremony, May 2 in East Lansing.

Rosanne, a 26-year veteran of MRS, shared her experiences starting as a new counselor in Ann Arbor and progressing through Central Office Lansing-based positions focusing on training, non-profit consultation, resource development, project management and program improvement before coming full circle back to her roots in a field office. In her current position as district manager, she is responsible for 27 staff who last year worked with approximately 2,500 people with disabilities and successfully placed 386 into employment. She currently serves on the board of the Capital Area Michigan Works!, continues to support youth and student programs and works closely with the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan.

She shared her belief with the seven master's level graduates that a vocational rehabilitation counselor is one of the best jobs in the world. It is a noble profession that allows you to be of service. It is unique in disciplines because of the blending of practicality and business thinking coupled with compas-

sion and human services. A counselor has real world tools and resources to assist a job seeker with a disability who needs help, engages in creativity and problem solving, is constantly learning and truly impacts upon the lives of others in a meaningful way. Rosanne said that along the way she worked hard, learned a lot, and had fun. She advised the graduates to do the same: work hard at whatever position they choose, learn as much as you can, share that learning whenever you can and have fun.

Two of the graduates interned with MRS and will continue to work with the DLEG agency. Kate Kierpec, who interned with MRS under the supervision of counselor, Winona Potter, will pursue a doctoral degree in the fall while continuing to work with MRS. Another graduate, Stephanie Wills-Coulter who also interned with MRS under the supervision of Jon Waller, has accepted a JET (Jobs, Education & Training) counselor position in Saginaw with MRS.

MRS has enjoyed a strong partnership with MSU's Rehabilitation Counseling Program for many years. They have been an excellent recruiting source for MRS and have collaborated on relevant research projects. U.S. News and World Report ranked MSU's program as the number one program for the second year in a row.



MRS Manager, Rosanne Renauer, Commencement Speaker at MSU Rehabilitation Counseling Program Graduation Ceremony, May 2.

MCB Offers Summer Programs for Youth Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

By Susan Turney, MCB



This summer the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) will offer seven programs for high school youth who are blind or visually impaired. All of the programs are state- and federally funded, and they are designed to provide youth with opportunities to prepare for independence and postsecondary education or employment. The programs are open to MCB clients, and eligible youth may enroll as MCB clients in order to partici-

pate in a summer program.

Summer STAGES (Students Achieving Their Goals, Empowered and Self-Confident), June 10 through August 17, offered by the Michigan Commission for the Blind and the Disability Network of Mid-Michigan, is open to MCB clients ages 14–21 who are in high school. The program provides 10 weeks of fun and social activities including bike riding, fishing, job tours, and an adventure team building day plus work experience at Camp Fish Tales in Pinconning, Michigan. For more information, contact Raymond Kirklin at 810-760-2034 or Danielle Smith at 517-335-2871.

MCB Business Enterprise Program Summer Employment, June 18 through August 10, is an eight-week food service and vending internship in MCB's Business Enterprise Program for blind and visually impaired youth ages 15–22. Participants work 20–30 hours per week, at \$6.95 per hour. The June 18 through August 10 timeline is flexible. For more information, contact Lucy Edmonds at 517 373-3459.

The Summer in the City Youth Program in Grand Rapids, June 18–28, is a training program for visually impaired youth ages 14 to 21 whose goals include postsecondary education and/or transitioning into competitive employment. This program is administered through the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Grand Rapids in partnership with MCB. Programs are taught in a group setting. The focus is on developing job readiness skills and daily living skills including, but not limited to, non-verbal communication skills, personal grooming, and orientation and mobility. For more information, contact Marcia Beare at 616-356-0188.

The MCB Detroit Youth Summer Program, June 25 through August 17, is for blind and visually impaired youth ages 14–21. The program provides youth with work experience, a one-week computer camp, and opportunities to develop vocational skills and personal adjustment skills. For more information, current MCB clients should contact their MCB counselor. Others please contact Shawnese Laury-Johnson at 313-456-1957.

The MCB College Prep Program, June 28 through August 18, at Western Michigan University (WMU) is for blind and visually impaired high school juniors and seniors, to give potential college students the opportunity to take a college class for credit and find out what it's like to be a college student. Students will live on the campus of WMU and have other classes and activities planned by MCB. The last day to begin the required college assessment in Kalamazoo is June 18. For more information, students should contact their MCB counselor or one of the MCB College Prep Program Coordinators: Lisa Kisiel at 269-337-3238 or Shannon McVoy at 269-337-3449.

Lions Bear Lake Camp, July 15–28, will focus on outdoor fun, skill development, encouraging independence, and developing social skills, plus a half-day of employment preparation activities led by Michigan Commission for the Blind staff. For more information, contact Elizabeth White at 810-760-2037.

The Quest for Success Summer Youth Program at Camp Tuhsmeheeta, July 22–28, is a week-long summer camp for blind and visually impaired youth ages 14–18. The camp activities will focus on independent living and socialization skills, career readiness, assistive technology, and traditional summer camp fun such as water sports, campfire stories, crafts, a dance, hikes, and more. Camp Tuhsmeheeta is located near Greenville, Michigan. Quest for Success is sponsored by the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) and Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind (OUB). For more information, current MCB clients should contact their counselor. All others please contact Faith Meadows at 269-337-3855.

Through its state and federally funded training and services, the Michigan Commission for the Blind provides training and opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve independence and employment, and annually serves approximately 4,500 state residents who are blind or visually impaired. For more information, visit the Michigan Commission for the Blind website at www.michigan.gov/mcb or call MCB toll-free at 1-800-292-4200 (voice) or 1-888-864-1212 (TTY).

JET Program Moves People off Welfare, Provides Training and Education Opportunities

Director Keith Cooley recently participated in a JET media event at the Capital Area Michigan Works! office in Lansing, along with Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow. In addition to showcasing JET, three JET clients were on hand to share their experiences with the program.

Angela Suor, single mother of three, has been working as a volunteer at a homeless shelter to gain more experience in her chosen field of community health. She recently obtained a job working with individuals with physical and mental challenges. Rudy Thompson, father of three, previously worked in construction but through JET has become a nurse and is employed at a nursing center. Kelly Schneider, single mom to five boys, has had a lifelong dream of becoming a nurse but had to put her dream on hold due to health issues. She is currently enrolled in a nursing certification program; as Kelly says, "Thanks to JET, I am finally able to fulfill my dream of becoming a nurse, one step at a time."



From left: Director Cooley, JET client Kelly Schneider, DHS Director Marianne Udow, Michigan Rehabilitation Services Lansing district manager Rosanne Renauer, JET client Rudy Thompson, JET client Angela Suor, and Capital Area Michigan Works! CEO Doug Stites.



DHS Director Marianne Udow explains how JET moves welfare recipients toward permanent self-sufficiency.



Kelly Schneider, JET Client



Rudy Thompson, JET client



Doug Stites speaks to the JET group.

Saginaw RICC Mom Cheers Son's Team to Class A Championship



By Crystal Galloway,
UIE, Saginaw RICC

Lolita Robinson, an unemployment insurance examiner (UIE) at the Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center, is the proud mother of Mario Lamar Robinson, a junior at Saginaw High School and a member of the school's recently crowned Class A Boy's State Basketball champions.

The team won 18 games with one loss in the regular season, before ending the year at 25-1.

Mario plays small forward for the Trojans. He is a reserve player and played in the championship game.

The Saginaw High Trojans are ranked second in the nation and received a special tribute from Governor Jennifer Granholm, State Senator Roger Kahn and State Representative Andy Coulouris for their accomplishments. They also received numerous other honors for their outstanding season.

Veterans Group Salutes UIA Staff for Their Help



By Lori Talamantes,
UIA Combined Wage
Claim Unit

Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff members at Cadillac Place were thanked recently with a plaque of appreciation from the Veterans Haven, a non-profit organization that helps honorably discharged veterans.

UIA staff recently donated \$424 to Veterans Haven from pro-

ceeds collected from those who participated in weekly Casual Days. Agency staff members donate \$2 on Wednesdays to dress casually for a cause. Every month a different charity benefits from these Casual Day donations.

Veterans Haven provides veterans with food, clothing, housing, transportation, medical supplies, counseling, referrals and job connections.

Veterans Haven is one of many charities that have benefited from donations made by UIA staff at Cadillac Place during Casual Days. Donations have gone to such charities as Focus Hope, Common Ground, Gleaners, Salvation Army, COTS, Meals on Wheels and the Alzheimer's Association. In 2006, Casual Days raised approximately \$4,500 for Detroit area charities.

Showing off the plaque of appreciation the agency received from Veterans Haven are the Cadillac Place UIA staff who head up the Casual Day collection efforts (l-r) Claudia Dziadzola, Alasha Smith-Thomas and Dorothy Trice.

Detroit RICC Team Collects Items to Combat Snack Attack!



By Norm Isotalo, Com-
munications Specialist

There are definitely things our troops worry about while they are stationed in the Middle East, but for Debra Walton's husband, there is no fear of snack attacks.

Debra and her Unemployment Insurance

band Tesfaye and the other men and women in his Michigan Army National Guard unit.

Debra, a UI examiner, had been sending monthly care packages to her husband, when her co-workers wanted to join in and help out. They started collecting various snack foods, such as cookies, potato chips, peanut butter, nuts, candies, jams and juices. They then packaged up the food and shipped it all to Debra's husband.

A staff sergeant in 377th Theater Command Unit, Tesfaye is stationed in Kuwait and has been there for the past year and a half. Debra is hopeful that he'll be coming home this July. When not serving in the Guard, he is a math teacher with the Detroit Public School system.

Team Q45 at UIA's Detroit RICC collected a variety of snack foods for Debra Walton's husband who is stationed in Kuwait with the National Guard. Debra (center) is holding a photo of her husband Tesfaye. With Debra is her co-workers (front, l-r) Bronwyn Burton, Mgr. Terrie Craighead-Henderson, Danette Shepherd, Debra Walton and Diane Sherman; Back row (l-r) Michelle Neal, Mary Davis, Tiheshia Durant, Shelia Robinson, Melanie Harrison-Holman and Chelsea Gill.

Agency (UIA) co-workers at the Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC) recently collected a large variety of snack food items for Debra's hus-

Professional Activities

Energy Expo Brightens Up Capitol Lawn!



Several energy saving appliances were on display at the Energy Expo.



Pictured here is the Energy Expo tent that was located on the Capitol lawn on May 8, 2007.

The Michigan Environmental Council, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance and Urban Option held the Michigan Energy Expo 2007 on May 8. Held on the Capitol's east lawn, the Energy Expo was an opportunity for attendees to talk to experts in Michigan's clean energy businesses, to learn about the positive impact that efficiency and renewable energy are already having on the state economy, and to view exhibits by the energy efficiency industry.



Pat Hudson sits with Patti Witte, DLEG regulation officer, after enjoying the free lunch offered at the Energy Expo.



Father Charles Morris, founder of Michigan Interfaith Power and Light, an organization promoting energy conservation in various congregations, stands with their display at the Energy Expo.



Professional Activities

OFIS Appreciates Its Employees

The Office of Financial and Insurance Services celebrated Employee Appreciation Week by recognizing several employees for their years of service to the state. Staff were also treated to ice cream with all the toppings, dished up by Commissioner Watters and the deputy commissioners.



Service with a smile! OFIS employees enjoyed a sundae bar with all the toppings. Servers from left were: Commissioner Linda Watters; Ken Ross, Deputy Commissioner of Policy; Cathy Kirby, Deputy Commissioner of Consumers Services; and John Schoonmaker, General Counsel.



OFIS staff recognized by Commissioner Watters (center) for years of service to the state were, from left: Valerie Glosson – 10 years; JoAnn Hubbard – 20 years; Jill Huiskens – 10 years; Karen Sage – 30 years; Peggy Bryson – 30 years.

Professional Activities

WCA Recognizes Staff During Employee Appreciation Week

By Kathy Rademacher

The Workers' Compensation Agency managers recognized their hard-working and dedicated staff with luncheons at several locations during employee appreciation week. The GOB and Ottawa Building staffs were treated to a pizza, pop and cake luncheon on Monday, May 7, at the GOB staff's temporary location; the Hollister Building. On Tuesday, May 8, the Funds Administration staff feasted on pizza, pop, and sweet treats at their Saginaw Highway office. It was a brown bag lunch on Wednesday, May 9, for the Detroit Cadillac Place staff with juice and coffee cake provided by the managers.

Seventeen WCA team members who had reached continuous service milestones in 2006 were recognized during appreciation week with certificates of achievement.

Congratulations to:

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Joanne Schafer | 40 years |
| Dennis Stinson | 35 years |
| Pat Campbell | 30 years |
| Robin Hines | 30 years |
| Linda Henry | 30 years |
| Mary Lou Hunsaker | 30 years |
| Joanne Montgomery | 30 years |
| Richard Smith | 30 years |
| Lynda Sorrells | 30 years |
| Susan Bauer | 25 years |
| Stephanie Temple | 25 years |
| Nancy Brownell | 20 years |
| John Cooper | 20 years |
| Debbie Doty | 20 years |
| Teresa Gagnon | 20 years |
| Karen Hamilton | 20 years |
| Sheila Wilkinson | 15 years |

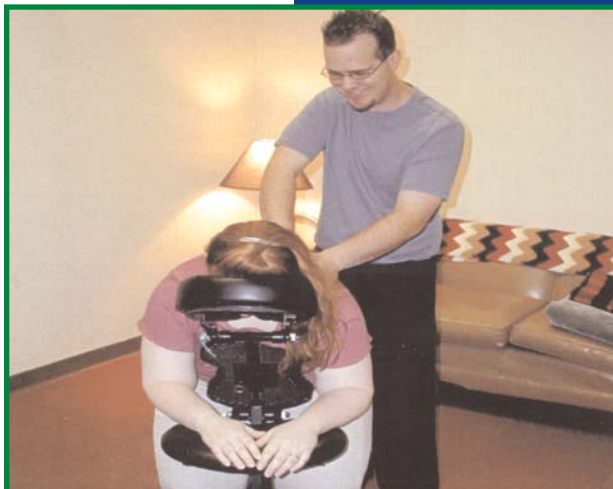


Workers' Compensation Agency staff based at the Hollister Bldg. in Lansing got together for a group photograph during Employee Appreciation Week in May.

Employee Appreciation Week Celebrated in Grand Style in Grand Rapids

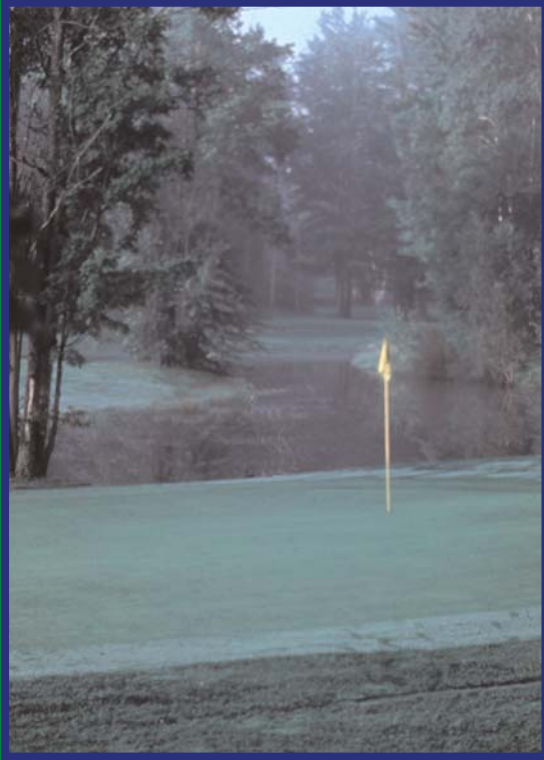
By Marianne Holst, Manager, GR RICC

Employees at the Unemployment Insurance Agency's (UIA) Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC) in Grand Rapids were thanked in a number of ways during Employee Appreciation Week in May. But probably one of the most unique and relaxing ways was with massages. Staff could sign up for 15-minute chair massages provided by a licensed massage therapist. Some 75 RICC and Problem Resolution Office staff signed up for the massages and compensated the therapist with tips.



A lucky employee enjoys a massage.

The 2007 DLEG Golf Outing Approaches



Ledge Meadows Golf Course, M-43, Grand Ledge Friday, August 10, 2007 —Starting at 9:00 a.m.

It's time to form your 4-person team (men, women, or mixed) and sign up for the Annual Golf Outing. The format for the outing is a 4-person team scramble with the cost being \$45.00 per person, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, lunch and prizes.

Most of us don't take this too seriously, so if you want to participate and don't have a team, we can assign you to one. Come on out to the course, meet your fellow workers and have a good time.

YOUR COMMITTEE: Staci Smith, 322-6595 (smsmith@michigan.gov) or Mr. Robin Spaulding, 322-1811 (rspaul@michigan.gov). If you have any questions call or send us an e-mail.

DLEG Golf Outing —Friday, August 10, 2007 Sign-Up Form

Deadline: July 31, 2007

Team Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Send payment to:

Mr. Robin Spaulding

4914 Churchill Road

Leslie, MI 49251

Four Team members:

Cart #1

1. _____

2. _____

Cart #2

1. _____

2. _____

People on the Move

Margaret Westerman Sews Up her UIA Career

Margaret Westerman, a manager in the Benefit Services area at the Unemployment Insurance Agency, retired in April ending a 28-year career with the state of Michigan.

For all but three years of her state career, Margaret worked with unemployment insurance (UI) and entirely on the benefits side of the program.

Margaret started out with the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC), UIA's predecessor, as a claims examiner in Flint. She later worked at a Detroit MESC office as a lead worker and then became an adjudications supervisor at the Lapeer office.

From Lapeer, Margaret moved to the UI Benefit Procedures Unit as an analyst and expert on UI benefit procedures. In 2002, she became manager of the Federal Program and Procedures area, overseeing the Benefit Procedures, Trade Readjustment Allowances and Combined Wage Claims units as well as the Interstate Benefit Coordinator.

For a brief three-year period, Margaret worked with the former Department of Social Services following a layoff from MESC.

Throughout her career, Margaret said she enjoyed her work, and she earned the respect of her co-workers; however, as she observed, "It's been a satisfying career, but now, it's time to move on and try new things."

In retirement, Margaret expects to spend more time doing those things she most enjoys, such as traveling. She will be heading to California twice this summer. Her first trip will be to visit her son and his family, and then a second time to slip a stitch or two at a knitting camp, where she will learn more about one of her favorite pastimes from knitting expert Jean Frost.

Retirement will also give her time for two more of her pursuits — bicycling and cross country skiing.



The managers Margaret Westerman supervises wish her well at a reception held in her honor on April 27. With Margaret are (l-r): Lori Talamantes, Combined Wage Claim; Sheri Kearns, Benefit Procedures; Westerman; and Linda West, Interstate Benefit Coordinator. Samuel Johnson, manager of the TRA/Special Programs Unit was unavailable for the photograph.

WCA Honors Joanne Schafer's 40 Years of Service

During Employee Appreciation Week, the Workers' Compensation Agency (WCA) honored 17 of its long-term employees, but none of them have served longer than Joanne Schafer. Joanne marked her 40th year of dedicated and continuous service to the state and the citizens of Michigan.

In 1966 Jo began her career in state government in downtown Lansing as a general clerk with the Department of State. Seven years later she joined the Workers' Compensation family. During her 34 years on the workers' comp team, she recalls working at the Core Building in downtown Lansing, the office move to the GOB in 1976, the introduction of the automated WORCS system in 1991, and the tem-

porary move to the Hollister Building that has brought her back to downtown Lansing where she started her career.

Throughout her career, Jo has kept a positive attitude and embraced the changes that have come. Jo says she has truly enjoyed her career, the people she has met, and the friends she has made over the years. She enjoys her current job in WCA's mail area and says "it's the people that make work a pleasure to come to."



WCA Director Jack Nolish presents a certificate of achievement to Joanne Schafer for her 40 years of state service.

People on the Move

Edwards and Jeffries Retire from AG's Office



Stella Jeffries (left) and Georgia Edwards (right) pose with Donna Welch, director, Attorney General UI Division, at a retirement party in their honor on May 24. Stella and Georgia proudly wear tiaras proclaiming that they are "officially retired."

Together they account for nearly 70 years of state service and on May 18, their line of service ended in retirement.

Although Georgia Edwards and Stella Jeffries retired from the Attorney General's Unemployment Insurance Division at Cadillac Place, both were DLEG employees and legal secretaries with unemployment insurance backgrounds.

Georgia retired with 33 years of state service, including more than 14 years with the MES Board of Review and was with the Attorney General's office since 1993. In retirement Georgia plans to become more involved with her church and to also do some traveling and playing with her grandchildren.

Stella has spent the last 27 years of her 34-year state career with the Attorney General's office. Earlier she had worked with the UI program in the Contributions Section and also with the Referee Division. She, too, plans on traveling in retirement and "to live life to its fullest."

Professional Activities

Two at UIA Earn Master's Degrees

By Ernestine Ray, Detroit RICC and Norm Isotalo, Media and Technology

Two Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff members have earned master's degrees from Central Michigan University.

Carol J. Robinson, a manager at the Detroit Remote Initial Claims Center (RICC), received her M.S. degree in administration with a concentration in human resources. It took Carol seven years to earn her master's degree because of various roadblocks. However, she persevered. Her motto is "you never fail until you stop trying." Carol plans to use her degree to help her advance within the agency.

Also earning her master's degree is **Jacqueline Whitted**, a departmental analyst with UIA's Integrity Initiative Unit at Cadillac Place. Jacqueline's M.S. is in public administration, which she earned in three years. For her master's thesis, she developed a feasibility study for a non-profit organization she is developing called Community of Grace, Inc. The year-old organization is designed to help Detroit area African-American women and children who are living with HIV and AIDS.



Jacqueline Whitted



Carol J. Robinson

We Get Letters ... and E-mails!

Rehabilitation Counselor Debbie Wilson of the Michigan Commission for the Blind's Flint Office received a letter of thanks from a client after she helped the client establish a furniture-making business. The letter said, in part, "THANK YOU for all your help and support for getting this business up and going."

Dear Mr. Cooley:

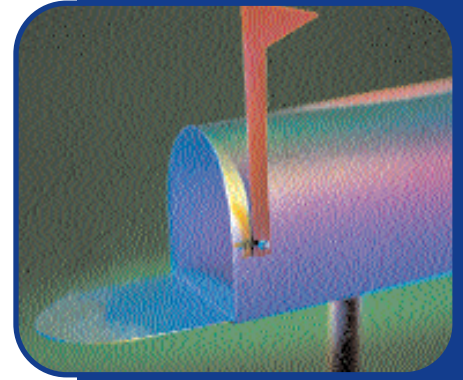
This letter is to notify you of the outstanding job Brandye Sedelmaier has done in working with The First Mortgage Corporation. We applied for a Mortgage Bankers License 1st lien & 2nd lien in the State of Michigan. Our application was returned requesting a few minor changes on our behalf and revised letters of credit from Comerica. We returned our application with the corrections and to our utmost appreciation the application was assigned to Brandye. She accepted the changes, however our warehouse lender (Comerica) still had errors on the letters of credit. She was kind enough to work with Comerica in getting the letters corrected. To our dismay the letters had errors again. Once again Brandye was so gracious in working directly with

Comerica in getting these letters corrected. The letters were finally corrected and Brandye personally contacted me with a voice of excitement in letting me know our license was approved. What a pleasure just hearing her voice with buoyancy, was such a delight.

As we are all aware, it is rare these days to find someone of such a kind heart, sincerity and willingness to help. Brandye has shown to be all of this and more. She projected a positive attitude throughout this process and made us feel that she was working with us and would help us any way she could. And she did.

I can not express to you enough the gratitude we have for her hard work, dedication, kindness and willingness to help others. She is an asset to your organization!

Sincerely,
Diane Daum, V.P. Operations Manager
The First Mortgage Corporation



Jennifer Fields Achieves Advanced Toastmaster Status

Jennifer Fields, manager with the Department of Labor & Economic Growth Wage and Hour Division, has recently achieved the level of Advanced Communicator Bronze with Toastmasters International. Jennifer had the Competent Toastmaster and Competent Leader level. Toastmasters International is an organization that focuses on communication, public speaking and leadership. Jennifer has been a member since 2002 of the "Secondary to None" Toastmasters Club that meets in Lansing every other Tuesday. For more information regarding the Secondary to None club, contact John Peck at (517) 322-5123.

Governor Reappoints Czyrka to Data Collection Agency

Governor Granholm has reappointed Bruno Czyrka, deputy director of the Workers' Compensation Agency, to the Data Collection Agency Governing Board, where he will represent the executive branch of state government for a term expiring December 31, 2007.

The Board determines workers' compensation data requirements for establishing workers' disability compensation insurance rates.



Tom Martin Embarks on Cross Country Bike Adventure

Dates: June 3—September 3

Tom Martin, Director of the Office of Policy & Legislative Affairs, is setting off on a bike trip across the United States in June. Beginning in Tom's home state of Washington, he will bicycle for the next three months across the upper portion of the United States to Nova Scotia.

The trip includes roads, paths and trails through the states of Washington, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, and the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of Michigan. After passing through our state, he will travel through parts of Canada, back through New York, New Hampshire and Maine, with Tom finally arriving in Nova Scotia by August.

While the route is not absolutely certain, many months of planning have gone into the preparation. Tom's wife, Mary Ann will drive him to Washington and pick him up in the East before heading home. Tom has promised to send photos if his trip and keep us informed of his progress. We will share these with you as they are received.



Director Cooley Gives Tom a congratulatory hug.



Tom Martin (center) enjoys a send-off from co-workers, including Jeannine Benedict, Marty Gibbs, Marcia Black-Watson, Jim Smiertka, Director Keith Cooley, Rita Canady, Sparky Hutting, and Teri Cook.



Sharetha Smith and Codonas Jackson are the proud parents of their daughter Miyah.



UIA's Carrie Hughes holds her new son Skowalski.



Saginaw RICC Welcome New Arrivals

By Crystal Galloway, UIE, Saginaw RICC

Two members of the Unemployment Insurance Agency's Saginaw Remote Initial Claims Center welcomed new members into their families in March.

Carrie Hughes, an unemployment insurance examiner (UIE), gave birth to a new son Skowalski Delano Hughes II on March 28 at 1:07 p.m. He weighed 6 lbs 8 oz and was 19 inches long. Baby Skowalski joins his big brother Javohn Dyer, age 6, and Carrie's husband Skowalski in the Hughes family.

UIA Sharetha Smith, gave birth to a new daughter Miyah Marsay Marcella Smith on March 23 at 12:08 a.m. Miyah weighed 8 lbs 13 oz and was 20½ inches long. She is the youngest of five children. Her sisters Miracle (13), Miriah (13), Makhi (2 ½) and brother Malik (4) are very happy to have their new sister.

UIA Brings a Child to Work!

On “Bring a Child to Work” day in April, the sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren of Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) staff had an opportunity to see and learn about the important work their parents or relatives do for the agency.

The day was an unqualified success as UIA's Remote Initial Claims Centers, Problem Resolution Offices and Cadillac Place units conducted a variety of activities designed to show the children a typical work day for their parent or relative and to expose them to the different types of work done throughout the agency.

For most of the kids, the day started with a teleconference hook-up between the three RICCs and Cadillac Place at which time they were officially welcomed to UIA by agency director Liza

Estlund Olson. After that, each UIA location held their own specially-designed activities for the children, ranging from office tours and work assignments to learning about the work done at UIA and the importance of customer service.

All in all, it was a busy day for the young people who visited the agency. They had an opportunity to learn about the job performed by their parent or relative, and to experience, first hand, a workplace environment and gain some appreciation for what is required in the work-a-day world.



Luereather Alexander, an unemployment claims examiner at UIA's Saginaw RICC, brought her son Carrte to work so he could learn more about what she does during her work day.



Youngsters at the Detroit RICC work on a team building project during “Bring a Child” to Work Day



Sisters (l-r): Kayshira and Jennifer Cunningham pose with Morgan Jamerson at the Grand Rapids RICC.



At Cadillac Place, some of the teens produced a mock video in the Office of Media Technology studios. All were then interviewed individually on camera for use on the “Job Show for Teens.”



[More About] UIA Brings a Child to Work!



Children at the Detroit RICC hold up a sign to mark the day.



At UIA's Lansing PRO, the children had a chance to use the Internet to visit the agency's website and those of other state programs.



Pizza was on the lunch menu for kids who were part of "Bring a Child to Work" Day at the Grand Rapids RICC.



Asad Dabas, an unemployment claims examiner at the Saginaw RICC, brought his daughter Jawaher to work.



John Palmer, UC manager, poses with some of the kids who participated in "Bring a Child to Work" Day.